

NSC BRIEFING

24 June 1954

INDOCHINA POLITICAL

- I. Re Bao Dai, it becoming less likely
he will return Vietnam, [REDACTED]

25X1X6

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- A. Good report says most French
and Vietnamese plans call for
his dismissal.
- B. But we feel Bao Dai will not
be easily fired. He may well
try to stay in France and pull
strings from there.
- II. Able Governor Tri of Tonkin trying
to find government to which address
his resignation.
- A. He fears immoral French
abandonment loyal population
of southern delta.

~~SECRET~~

B. [REDACTED] fears sudden plea from Tri or Vietnam government to US for Dunkirk-like sea lift of sizable part Tonkin population.

III. One of key French officials Indochina emphasizes disintegration in Central and South Vietnam.

- A. He says Vietnam army not now a defense but a danger.
- B. Also says Viet Minh sending battle-hardened Tonkinese cadres to South Vietnam to stiffen its forces there.

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III. Source says French believe 500 potential Viet Minh truck drivers sent from delta to Thai Nguyen area will replace borrowed Chinese drivers.

25X1X7 A. [REDACTED]
25X1X700240001 [REDACTED] Preparation for possible inspections by neutral nations following agreements Geneva.

IV. Cogny believes battle corps delta perimeter ready move "at any time."

A. Says if he were Viet Minh commander, he would have attacked delta two weeks ago.

1. Cogny thinks political considerations might explain delay.

25X1X7

V. [REDACTED] large quantities Chinese aid crossed border past several weeks.

- A. Materiel largely ammo and heavy weapons; 36 to 50 105mm howitzers; *70 36-MM RECOILLESS RIFLES AND 6 MULTIBARRELED ROCKET LAUNCHERS*
- B. French opinion: materiel destined for Thai Nguyen area, where enemy's nine battalions in training may eventually constitute new division, possibly artillery.

VI. Regardless plans major assault, early intensification delta activity forecast.

- A. "Indications" that Division 320 plus some irregulars ordered prepare for action on 1 July in southern delta area. One regiment Division 304 also may be involved. *THUS, FOR FIRST TIME, A UNIT FROM DIEN BIEN PHU MAY BE CROSSING INTO THE DELTA PROPER.*

1. French undecided whether
this would be part of
attack on entire delta
or only limited campaign.

B. Strong additional attacks
Hanoi-Haiphong LOC by several
enemy battalions expected.

1. Units may first turn
against Ke Sat-Hung Yen
route, isolate strategic
Hung Yen.

C. Report of 37mm AA defenses near
Haiduong, just east of Ke Sat,
suggests enemy plans for
increased action that area,
possibly in conjunction with
interdiction Hung Yen route.

1. Bridge across Thai Binh
River there most vulnerable
link Hanoi-Haiphong LOC.

VII. New plan: retain French units southern delta.

A. French apparently wish avoid reorganization in face enemy threat, also doubt Vietnamese ability hold area.

B. Extent insecurity southern delta indicated by closing **THE LARGEST** spinning and weaving mills in Nam Dinh; this one of largest manufacturing enterprises in Indochina.

VIII. Meanwhile, security five once-safe provinces South Vietnam said by Vietnamese officer to have deteriorated markedly last half year.

A. He blames poor pay, inadequate arms local militia and corruption, incompetence local governments; says Vietnamese army "concerned much more with tailoring of uniform and unearned decorations than with primary purpose of combating Communist enemy."

B. His opinion--unless remedied, "all would be lost" these provinces within two or three months.